GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE
LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO:306
ANSWERED ON:14.08.2000
HIV AFFECTED CHILDREN
BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH;KINJARAPU YERRANNAIDU

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of children who have HIV positive or are full blown AIDS cases;

(b) whether there is five times increase of the infection among children in the past one decade;

(c) if so, the new cause of the increase in the incidence of HIV/AIDS in children; and

(d) the steps proposed to be taken to check such rise of AIDS among children?

Answer

MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (DR. C.P. THAKUR)

(a)to(d): A statement is laid on the table of the Lok Sabha.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 306 FOR 14.8.2000

1. Based on the sentinel survey done in 1998, the Government of India has estimated that India would have around 3.5 million HIV infections in the country in adults between 15 to 49 years of age. Estimates have not been made for children below 15 years of age. However, UNAIDS report on the Global HIV/AIDS epidemic, June 2000 has estimated 1.60 lakh infections among children between 0-14 years of age. But they have not given the basis of such estimates. The reported cumulative number of full blown AIDS cases among children below the age of 14 years as on 31st July 2000 is only 512, as cases of full blown AIDS are often not reported.

2. There is a gradual increase in HIV infection among the children over the years. The main reasons for the increase in HIV infection among the child population are i) increasing number of HIV infected mothers due to overall increase in HIV transmission in the general population, and, ii) sexual exploitation of street children.

3. Government of India has initiated a pilot project for prevention of mother to child transmission of HIV infection(MTCT) in 11 centers spread over 5 high HIV prevalent states in the country, namely, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Manipur. The objectives of the study is to assess the feasibility of administering AZT prophylaxis to prevent the transmission of HIV infection from mother to child in pregnant mothers. This study has started in March 2000 for a period of one year. It has been found in other countries of the World that such short course regimen of AZT reduces mother to the child transmission of HIV by 50 %.The overall objective of the project is to assess the feasibility of administration of short course AZT prophylaxis to pregnant mothers starting at 36 weeks of gestation. As on 31st May 2000, a total of 19,582 mothers have been counseled in these centers, out of which, 8847(45%) have voluntarily been screened for HIV infection. Of these mothers screened, 138 (1.5%) have been found to be HIV positive. Thirty six mothers from this group have been put on AZT prophylaxis and 13 mothers have delivered.

4. Besides, the street children have been identified as one of the major group to be targeted for preventing the spread of HIV infection. A comprehensive strategy of Behaviour change communication, counseling, provision of health services and empowering them by creating an enabling environment for sustained change of behaviour is being implemented. Government of India has funded 21 NGOs for implementing targeted interventions in 12 states/union territories/muncipal corporation, exclusively for street children. The total cost of these projects is Rs. 1.27 crores.